

Message Text

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ACTION IO-14

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2008

INFO USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 6667

FODAG

PASS USDA FOR ASST. SECY. HATHAWAY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: FAO, AORG

SUBJECT: DISCUSSION WITH FAO DG SAOUMA

1. IMPROMPTU DISCUSSION BETWEEN U.S. REP TO FAO AND SAOUMA AT CFA FIRST-DAY RECEPTION PRODUCED FOLLOWING INFO AND OPINIONS.

2. ON WFC, DG IMMEDIATELY NOTED GROUP OF 77 RESOLUTION CLAIMING WFC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR POSITION. HE ALSO NOTED STRONG UK BID, COMMENTED THAT FONSEC OWEN, DURING LONDON ACC, AT DINNER AT WHICH HE HAD SAOUMA ON ONE SIDE OF HIM AND WALDHEIM ON OTHER, HAD NOT LET OPPORTUNITY SLIP. SAOUMA OPINED THAT WALDHEIM IMPRESSED WITH KEARNS AND WOULD, IN FACE GROUP 77 BID, HAVE DIFFICULTY APPOINTING ANOTHER AMERICAN, NOTWITHSTANDING QUALIFICATIONS. IN THIS REGARD, IT WAS CLEAR SAOUMA HAD RESPECT FOR WILLIAMS' CREDENTIALS. NEVERTHELESS, HE INDICATED HE HAD GIVEN WALDHEIM SEVERAL ADDITIONAL DEVELOPING COUNTRY NAMES, SHOULD WALDHEIM WISH TO MEET GROUP 77 PRESSURE. HE DOUBTED TANCO WOULD SUCCEED WITH RUMORED EFFORTS COMBINE TWO TOP JOBS.

3. SAOUMA MADE CLEAR HE HAD LITTLE USE FOR WFC, NOTHING THAT CONFIDENTIAL

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IT HAD ORIGINALLY BEEN CREATED TO OPERATE IN FAO ORBIT BUT, IN FACT, COORDINATED LITTLE WITH FAO OR WITH ANYONE ELSE. HE NOTED HE WAS ALERT TO KEEP IT FROM INTERFERING IN FAO'S AREA, CITING AGRARIAN REFORM CONFERENCE AND RESEARCH AS CASES IN POINT. BAKER NOTED WFC SAW THESE AS INFO ITEMS.

4. ASKED ABOUT WFC ACCENT ON FOOD PLANS STARTED UNDER

MORIBUND CGFPI, SAOUMA DISPARAGED THESE, OBSERVING THAT, WHILE THEY WERE INTENDED PROVIDE FRAMEWORK AND ENCOURAGEMENT TO DONOR INPUTS, IN FACT DONORS WOULD PAY NO MORE ATTENTION TO THEM THEN TO FAO COUNTRY PERSPECTIVE STUDIES (WHICH DG NOW DOWNPLAYING). DONORS, ESPECIALLY IBRD, TRUSTED ONLY THEIR OWN STUDIES AND MISSIONS OR THOSE COMMISSIONED BY THEM.

5. SAOUMA'S GENERAL ATTITUDE TOWARD WFC AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR POSITION WAS THAT THIS WAS SYG'S PROBLEM AND HE WOULD GO ALONG WITH SYG DECISION. AS FAR AS HE WAS CONCERNED, WFC ROLE COULD BE BETTER PLAYED BY CALLING FAO COUNCIL TOGETHER AT MINISTERIAL LEVEL EVERY 18 MONTHS OR TWO YEARS. (COMMENT: IT IS CLEAR, NEVERTHELESS, THAT SINCE WFC CAN'T BE THAT EASILY DISCARDED, HE IS ADVOCATING A GROUP 77 LEADERSHIP OF TYPE WHICH WOULD BE COMFORTABLE OR INNOCUOUS FROM HIS STANDPOINT.)

6. QUERIED ON PROGRAM COMMITTEE, SAOUMA RAISED ICP WHICH, IN HIS MIND, IS EVIDENTLY MAIN PRICKLY ISSUE ON THE PC AGENDA. ASKED IF HE HAD DISCUSSED ICP IN LONDON, SAOUMA REPLIED IN AFFIRMATIVE, INDICATING HE HAD ALSO DINED WITH BISHOP AND HAD ENCOURAGED CONTINUED COLLABORATION BETWEEN FAO AND SOME SECTORAL INDUSTRY GROUPS WITHIN ICP (PULP AND PAPER MENTIONED). HE EXPRESSED DOUBT THAT SYG AND MORSE WOULD BE ABLE TO TOLERATE ICP "INSIDE" ROLE IN UNDP ANY MORE THAN CONFIDENTIAL

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HE COULD IN FAO BUT IMPLIED HE WAS NOT TRYING INFLUENCE OUTCOME OF ICP NEGOTIATIONS IN NEW YORK.

7. SAOUMA TERMINATED CONVERSATION BEFORE REPLYING TO QUESTION AS TO HOW HE SAW PROGRAM REVIEW GOING IN NEW PC. WE ARE, HOWEVER, PLANNING EXPLORE THIS DURING WEEK WITH PHILLIPS WHO SPEAKS AS IF HE HAS BEEN GIVEN MAJOR ROLE IN THIS MATTER.

8. SAOUMA INDICATED HE EXPECTING BAKER-PECKHAM GG CALL NEXT MONDAY SO SUBJECT MATTER FOR THAT WAS NOT RAISED. WE HAVE, IN THIS REGARD, QUERIED WEST AS TO WHETHER HE IS READY TO BEGIN INFORMAL BUDGET DIALOGUE WITH US BEFORE THAT CALL OR PREFERS TO BEGIN AFTERWARDS. HE IS MULLING THAT OVER (PROBABLY WITH DG).

9. SEPARATELY, WE HAVE BEEN TOLD THAT WORK OF TWO FORESTRY PROJECTS HANDLED BY ICP ARE BEING INCORPORATED IN WORK OF FORESTRY DIVISION. GARDNER

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